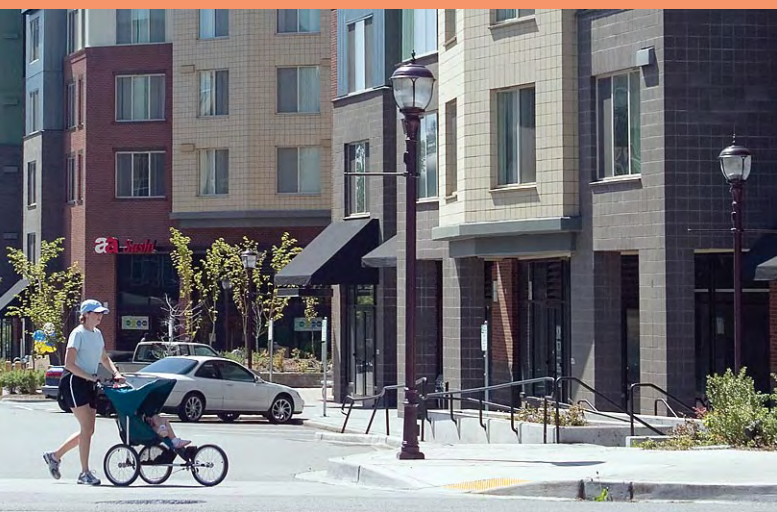


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alkable neighborhood design can help us reach our goals for efficient transportation, improved air quality, healthier communities, and reduced greenhouse emissions.

Research completed in 2005 by King County established a link between neighborhood design and improved community health. Features that support better health include more compact development, walkable neighborhoods, a wider variety of land uses close to home and work, a more connected street system, and access to transit.

Now HealthScape is putting that research to work by creating tools to help planners, decision-makers, and citizens invest in transportation and development projects that will help us meet our shared goals for a better future.



Learn more/ participate

HealthScape is a dynamic project that draws on the participation of residents, planners, public health officials, advocates, elected officials, and many others. It will continue to rely on wide participation to help refine the tools now being developed, and you can be a part of this process.

For more information, please visit our Web site (see address below) or contact Christina O'Claire (christina.oclaire@metrokc.gov, 206-263-4753).

King County Executive Ron Sims, a leader in healthy community design, commutes to work on his bike.

Case study: SW 98th Street corridor

HealthScape principles can be applied to planning processes in urban, suburban, and rural communities. For example, King County has incorporated findings from the LUTAQH study into planned improvements to the SW 98th Street corridor in White Center. Enhancements to sidewalks and the streetscape along the main commercial corridor will complement a new trail connection to the nearby Greenbridge development. In addition, the new Development Impact Assessment Tool will be used to evaluate proposed zoning changes in the neighborhood.

To learn more about this and other projects in King County, visit the HealthScape Web site (see address below).



King County
HealthScape

Community design for health and the environment

Sustainability through healthy community design



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June 2007

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HealthScape is King County's program to promote improved public health and air quality through wise land use and transportation choices.

www.metrokc.gov/HealthScape

Study findings

King County's Land Use, Transportation, Air Quality and Health (LUTAQH) study found solid connections between the design of a neighborhood and health and air quality in that neighborhood.

The study found that an increase of just five percent in a neighborhood's walkability resulted in:

- 6.5% fewer miles driven each day per person
- 5.5% less major air pollutants (nitrogen oxides and volatile organic compounds) emitted
- 32% more time spent per person being physically active
- Lower average BMI or body mass index* (by 0.23 points)

**A ratio of weight to height that is commonly used to determine obesity*

Graphic by Lawrence Frank & Company



Residents in the parts of the county with the most interconnected street networks drive 26 percent fewer miles per day than those who live in the most sprawling areas of the county. Points A and B are the same distance apart in both neighborhoods, but travel time between them is much shorter in the one with streets arranged in a grid.

Transit use is highest where walking is most prevalent, and walking is most prevalent where transit is convenient and efficient.

People walk more in neighborhoods with a wide variety of retail services and easy access to those services. This improves health and reduces pollutants.

What is "walkability?"

A walkable neighborhood is one that has:

- **Compact residential development**—with single family houses on small lots, townhomes, duplexes, or apartments
- **Compact retail development**—that is not dominated by large parking lots
- **A mix of land uses**—living, working, and shopping activities all within walking distance
- **A well-connected street network**—typically a "grid" of streets with small blocks



Graphic by Tao Zhang and Sue McCauley

Residents of more walkable areas are less likely to be overweight or obese and more likely to report being physically active.

Tools to help planners and decision-makers



HealthScape is using research findings from the LUTAQH study to create two tools that will help jurisdictions in King County predict the health and environmental benefits of new development and transportation investments.

1. Transportation Programming Tool

This will allow planners to predict the likely benefits of proposed non-motorized transportation projects such as bike lanes and walking trails. A benefits calculator created from the LUTAQH research results will allow them to weigh the likely increases in route connectivity and transit access, as well as the decreases in conflicts with vehicles, associated with each proposal. It will also take into

account factors such as population density in the surrounding community. The result will be a score for each project's predicted transportation, safety, economic, air quality, and health benefits.

2. Development Impact Assessment Tool

This tool will focus on proposed land-use changes, using the study results to modify a standard modeling tool (the PLACES model) to assess the likely impacts and benefits of development plans. It will allow planners to compare baseline scenarios against various alternatives to determine the alternatives' relative effects on transportation (i.e., transit use and walking), public health (i.e., obesity levels), and air quality (including greenhouse gas emissions).

